



GARELOCHHEAD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY
FOR THE COMMUNITY

Minutes for the Garelochhead Community Council meeting

Held virtually owing to COVID-19 restrictions at 1900hrs on 19th January 2021

Members present:

Watson Robinson	Convenor
Martin Croft	Vice Chair, CC
Carole Spencer	Member
David Norton	Member
Hilary Worton	Member
Craig Ritchie	Member
Fergus Madigan	Member
Margaret Stratton	Treasurer

Attending:

Cllr Iain Shonny Paterson	Councillor
Maurice Corry	MSP

Public:

Ron Fletcher

Guests:

Donna Lawson	Argyll & Bute Council, Roads
John Urquhart	Helensburgh & District Access Trust
Anne Urquhart	Helensburgh & District Access Trust

Apologies:

Gemma Kimmitt	Member
Laura Cameron	Member (co-opted)
Fiona Robinson	Member



1. Introductions and welcome

Apologies – as above

Declarations of interest – none

Watson opened the meeting and welcomed members, guests and invited guests.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting (as amended) were accepted, proposed by Martin Croft and Seconded by Craig Ritchie

3. Police Scotland & CMU reports

Police Scotland report: see appendix

MOD Police requested the following points to be mentioned and minuted:

- Any suspicious activity should be reported to the MDP control room on 01436 655695 or in an emergency 999
- The Rural Watch scheme still exists
- The use of drones are not permitted around Faslane or Coulport as it is restricted airspace. Any sightings should be reported to the MDP control room,

4. Councillors' updates

Cllr Paterson reported as follows:

- The Rest & Be Thankful bund is complete and the road is now open daily from 9am to 4pm. Outwith those hours the Old Military Road will be in use.
- Ongoing discussions regarding the signage for the R&BT on the Haul Road
- No update on the planned Portincapple junction upgrade. Will follow up and report back.

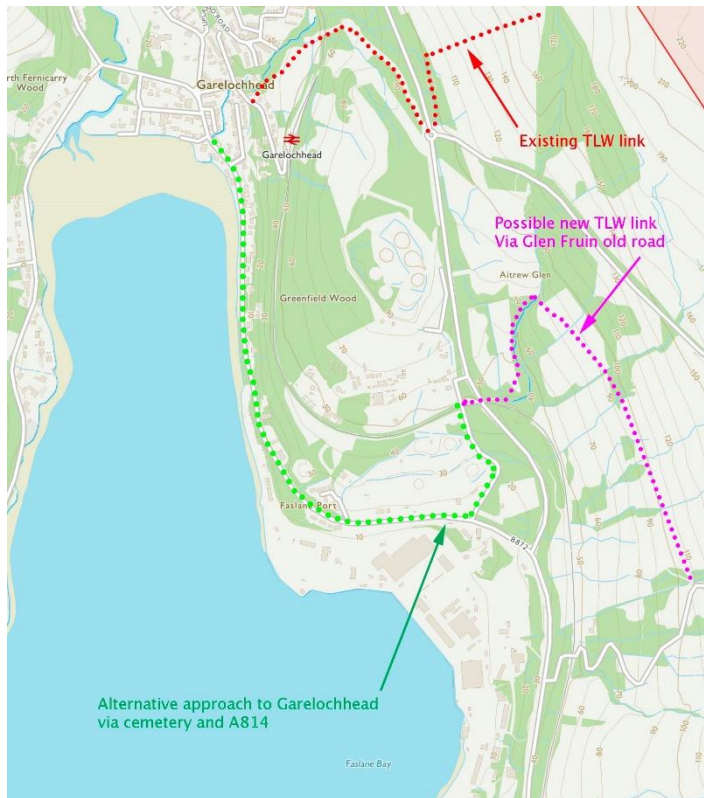
5. Three Lochs Way (TLW) – guest, John Urquhart, Helensburgh & District Access Trust

Mr Urquhart presented a map showing a potential alternative route for the TWL which would

- Re-route the TLW via Garelochhead



- Remove the need for walkers to cross the dangerous Haul Road at the Yankee Road.



Mr Urquhart stated that he had walked the route shown in pink and thinks it is potentially a good alternative, however there are some issues to be resolved:

- i. Who owns the land (MOD?)
- ii. A trail would need to be built over rough land
- iii. Signage would need to be created and installed

The Helensburgh & District Access Trust has tried for several years without success to allow access across MOD land.

It may be that the land is owed by a local farmer who could be open to a discussion over access.

Cllr Paterson noted that the proposed route would involve a busy road crossing by the North Gate of HMNB Clyde and that this would require road safety signage.

Mr Urquhart stated that the Trust currently does not have resources or capacity to take on this work and he believed that the Community Council might have more success negotiating with the MOD.



ACTION: Secretary to send a summary of the points raised to Martin Croft and Craig Ritchie. They will then make contact with MOD and the farmer in question and start discussions.

5a. Haul Road signage

The discussion on the TLW also covered the issue of the dangerous road crossing on the Haul Road. Walkers using the TLW have to cross the Haul Road on a blind summit and there are concerns that this is a very fast stretch of road and drivers may not see pedestrians in the road. Mr Urquhart stated that they have recently replaced the signs for walkers on the Yankee Road alerting them to the danger of the fast road ahead, however there are no signs for drivers. The Council Roads team have looked into this and have responded that it would not be appropriate to add signage since they consider it would be distracting for drivers. Fergus Madigan commented that there are 2 or 3 signs on the Coulport Road warning of blind summits and suggested that the same approach could be taken for the Haul Road/Yankee Road crossing point. He also noted that it also is particularly dangerous for drivers pulling out from the parking area to rejoin the Haul Road.

Ms Lawson (A&B Roads Officer) noted that the MOD has responsibility for the Coulport Road and so it can't be compared with the Haul Road which is a public road. She said she would look at the data for this spot to see what evidence exists of accidents. She stated that she was of the opinion that since the crossing place was on the brow of the hill it was more effective to put warning signs for walkers since drivers cannot see the blind spot.

Cllr Paterson and Watson Robinson both asked the Roads Officer to reconsider the decision. This is a clear hazard and we should not wait for an accident to happen before putting some driver warning signs in place.

6. Traffic in Garelochhead – guest, Donna Lawson, Roads, Argyll & Bute Council

Craig Ritchie reported that he has written to the Council and to Police Scotland regarding the speed data, pointing out that the use of average speeds can be misleading. The speed survey was done between the bus depot and the oil depot over a 6 day period and showed that:

- 85% of vehicles were travelling at 45 mph or less
- 1,500 vehicles were travelling at more than 40 mph
- 94 vehicles were travelling at over 50 mph
- 3 vehicles were travelling at over 60 mph

Donna Lawson, Council Roads Officer explained that they use mean speeds, not 85% threshold in their assessments. The average speed of all vehicles was 33mph, which she agreed was above the speed limit for that stretch of road, but not excessively so. She explained that this road is considered a 'distributor road' as it feeds onto the peninsular and up towards Arrochar. The council does not tend to use physical features



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like speed bumps etc on distributor roads. She stated that the council was happy to look at the speed limits at both sides of Garelochhead, but would be unwilling to introduce new speed calming measures. Ms Lawson went on to state that driver perception is what needs to be addressed since it appears that drivers assume the speed limit is 40 mph, not 30 mph. In addition, any measures that are put in place would need to be self-sustaining and not require the police to be there to enforce them. She also noted that speed cameras are the responsibility of Police Scotland, not the Council.

Craig Ritchie countered these comments stating that quoting an average of 33mph is misleading because of the large volume of traffic using that stretch of road. Using the data provided around 300 vehicles per day would potentially be subject to police action.

Cllr Paterson mentioned the traffic calming measures that have been introduced at Arnprior and asked Ms Lawson what justification or evidence was needed by the council for something similar to be done in Garelochhead. He added that it was not acceptable to wait for an accident to happen before taking action. He stated that he would follow up directly with Ms Lawson to press the issue.

The discussion moved on to the topic of the flashing 30mph sign and that it was not effective as it is not in the optimum location. Ms Lawson commented that her predecessor had previously assessed the location of the sign back in 2016. Martin Croft noted that the justification for not moving it at that time had been lack of funding and suggested that we could write to our MSPs with the data since the argument about lack of funding means that this dangerous situation persists.

Ms Lawson concluded by stating that in her opinion the priority was to understand why this area is not perceived by drivers to be a built-up area and subject to a 30mph limit. She has proposed a number of suggestions to her manager which are being looked into, however they are not yet ready to discuss these with the community. Depending on workload she expects to be ready to discuss further options within a couple of months.

Watson Robinson thanked Ms Lawson for attending on behalf of the council and stated that although it had been a good discussion we need to see some action. This is a long-stranding issue and something needs to be done to address the problem. The Community Council has a duty to raise these sort of issues which are a major concern to residents, and we trust that the Council officers will take this matter seriously. He asked Ms Lawson to ensure that we are kept fully informed of any potential solutions that are under consideration.

After Ms Lawson left the meeting the discussion continued with Members expressing frustration at the continued delays. It was proposed that we write to MSPs to ask for their support. Should we consider putting up our own signs? Watson Robinson suggested that we continue to press the Council Roads team for a resolution, but should give Ms Lawson the opportunity to come back to us as she had committed to do so.



ACTION: Craig Ritchie to continue to liaise with Council and with Police Scotland to keep up the pressure to find a solution.

ACTION: Craig Ritchie and Secretary (Hilary Worton) to work together to draft a letter to Jim Smith (head of Roads & Infrastructure at A&B Council) to summarise the discussions to date.

7a. Convenor's report

- The Xmas tree has been taken down and lights removed. Many thanks to the MOD, Mark Fitzsimmons, Babcock Marine, David Grant, Fusebox for the wiring, and Alan Moodie for the additional lighting.
- Have been in touch with the Health Centre for information on COVID-19 vaccine roll-out and offered help passing on information to the community via social media etc.
- We note the sad passing of Ken Blakely, regular attendee of these meetings, and former member of the GCC. He'll be sadly missed.
- Many thanks to Cllr Freeman and Margaret Stratton for the £500 donation from the winding up of the Gibson Benevolent Trust. The funds will be set aside to cover costs associated with Xmas lights in the future.
- We have had a thank you message back from Alistair McIntyre in response to the letter we sent him in appreciation of his hard work for the community.
 - It was suggested that we also write to thank Tom and Sandra Ward for their community work
 - It was also suggested that we contact the Helensburgh Advertiser to notify them that these local people have been recognised in this way

ACTION: Secretary to prepare letter for Tom & Sandra Ward

ACTION: Secretary to contact Helensburgh Advertiser

7b. Vice Convenor

- MSP Maurice Corry has written to A&B Council asking them to local the cemetery gates which were removed some time ago for repair. They have confirmed they will try to locate them. War Graves Commission have said they can't help unfortunately. If A&B Council can't find them we can look into fundraising to replace the gates, ideally using local tradespeople to make the new gates. Our goal should be to have replacement gates in place in time for Remembrance Day this year.
- Cllr Freeman has confirmed that the previously listed derelict building in the cemetery can be demolished

ACTION: Martin Croft to follow up with Cllr Freeman to find out when the building can be demolished.



7c. Secretary

- Helensburgh & Lomond Community Planning Group are meeting on 8th February and have requested a report from us on our activities during the pandemic. I will write a brief report and include that we have made available 340 face masks, 50 fruit & veg boxes to the over 80s, 12 kids activity packs, and a telephone helpline number for those who need assistance
- We have heard back from the Council to say that they will reply within 14 days to our letter regarding Japanese knotweed
- Have been continuing to pass notices, consultations, etc to Laura to post on our social media streams.
- We've received notification that it is intended to hold an NHS & Frontline Workers Day on 5th July and the suggestion is to hold community events, street parties etc. We agreed that given the uncertainty over lockdown restrictions and social distancing we should keep this on the backburner and revisit nearer the time.
- We have received an email regarding the problems of water run-off on the Haul Road. Watson confirmed that this has been reported to the Council Roads team and that Cllr Freeman is following up.

7d. Treasurer

No change from last report, apart from the addition of the £500 donation mentioned in the Convenor's report.

Account balance £4,475.57

7e. MOD

Craig noted that there was little to report. Covid-19 management remains a top priority. Restricting access to the base seems to be improving the situation along with the mitigation measures that are in place.

7f. Planning

Gemma Kimmitt has decided to step down from her role as Planning Officer and proposed Fergus Madigan to take over in her place. This was seconded by David Norton and agreed unanimously.

Fergus stated that recent focus has been on the planning application in Portincaple (20/00094/PP) and we have requested a delay to the public hearing owing to the difficulties in preparation with the lockdown restrictions.



We have been contacted by members of the public with regard to the planning application for Station Road (19/02328/PP). A summary of the issues raised in objections have been provided to the Community Council and are included in the appendix below.

- Carole Spencer commented that this area is used regularly by local people and is an area well-known to have a problem with flooding and black ice. This is the main community pathway adjoining the Three Lochs Way. She queried what the plans are for the pathway itself (believed to be owned by Sustrans)
- Maurice Corry, MSP, said he would check with John Urquhart (Helensburgh & District Access Trust) regarding the path, as well as with Tom Murphy (A&B Council) and Network Rail.

ACTION: Fergus to review documents on the planning portal and circulate any relevant information regarding impact on core paths to GCC members and John Urquhart.

7g. Environment & Pet Trac

Carole reported that she has completed the forms for the purchase of the Pet Trac device. Cost is £309.60 including VAT and postage.

ACTION: Carole to contact Treasurer to organise purchase payment of Pet Trac.

7h. Church update

David Norton reported that the Church is closed again under the current lockdown restrictions, but looking to start doing services via Zoom from Sunday 24th January.

The church building needs some repairs, with a leaking roof. A survey has been done but work is on hold due to Covid-19 restriction, and pending a decision on how much money can be spent on this.

7i. Social media and Community Planning Partnership

No updates available other than what is mentioned in the Secretary's report above.

Residents' Association Updates

No updates for Garelochhead RA or for Portincaple RA available in time for the meeting (or the minutes)



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The Convenor reminded Members that it had previously been agreed that the Community Council would always have representation on the Garelochhead RA and so we are now looking for someone to replace Mary. He urged members to consider volunteering for this and asked anyone interested to let him know.

ACTION: contact Watson Robinson and George Freeman if you are interested in representing the GCC in the Garelochhead Residents' Association.

AOB

- **Comments from Maurice Corry:**

- Noted that Covid-19 remains main parliamentary focus and the vaccine supply and roll-out.
- Rate of increase in Covid-19 infections seems to be slowing
- New travel restrictions have been introduced; travellers entering the UK need to have a negative Covid test within 72 hours of travel, with heavy fines imposed on carriers.
- Vaccination of care home residents and the over 80s is well underway. By the end of February it is expected that most over 70s will have also been vaccinated.
- Mass vaccination centres are being set up with the MOD being used to assist. GPs are now rolling out the AstraZeneca vaccine. Goal is 80% of folks being vaccinated.
- The vaccines are safe and will protect others as well. Communications materials are being prepared to address anti-vaxxers and vaccine-hesitancy.
- 5 key communication points are being prepared for dissemination via Community Councils.
- Other current parliamentary issues: Shop Assistants Safety Bill and Hate Crimes Bill, including freedom of speech.
- Scottish Government elections are scheduled to take place in May this year and MSPs will remain in post until 5th May.

Date of next meeting

Next meeting will be held (virtually - tbc) on 16th March 2021.



ACTIONS FOR FOLLOW UP AT NEXT MEETING

Agenda item	Who	What
Three Lochs Way	Hilary	Secretary to send a summary of the points raised to Martin Croft and Craig Ritchie.
	Martin & Craig	Make contact with MOD and the farmer in question and start discussions.
Speeding in Garelochhead	Craig	Craig Ritchie to continue to liaise with Council and with Police Scotland to keep up the pressure to find a solution.
	Craig & Hilary	Craig Ritchie and Secretary (Hilary Worton) to work together to draft a letter to Jim Smith (head of Roads & Infrastructure at A&B Council) to summarise the discussions to date.
Convenor's report	Hilary	Secretary to prepare letter for Tom & Sandra Ward Secretary to contact Helensburgh Advertiser
Vice Chair's report	Martin	Martin Croft to follow up with Cllr Freeman to find out when the cemetery building can be demolished.
Planning	Fergus	Planning application 19/02328. Review documents on the planning portal and circulate any relevant information regarding impact on core paths to GCC members and John Urquhart.
Pet Trac	Carole	Carole Spencer to contact Treasurer to organise purchase payment of Pet Trac.
Residents' Associations	All	Contact Watson Robinson and George Freeman if you are interested in representing the GCC in the Garelochhead Residents' Association.



Appendix

1. Police Scotland report



Garelochhead CC
Police Scotland Report

2. Summary of issues raised regarding planning application 19/02326/PP



Summary
19-02328-PP.docx

[End of Minutes]